

# ANIMAL SAFETY TIPS

recommended by our friend at [aspca.org](http://aspca.org)

**Most animals seem friendly and harmless, yet every year in the U.S. alone...**

- More than million people are bitten;
- Thousands of people are seriously injured; and
- About 100 people are killed by these animals.

## **Why do animals attack?**

**There are many reasons. They may attack if they are:**

- protecting offspring, territory or children
- threatened
- in pain, injured or ill
- surprised
- bothered while eating
- frustrated (they've been chained up)
- teased
- excited, nervous or "playing".



**Listed below are some steps you can take to avoid trouble when dealing with animals.**

- **Do not** go into yards or homes until you are sure all animals have been properly restrained.
- **Never** approach or touch an unfamiliar or unfriendly animal.
- **Never** tease or threaten any animal.
- Call ahead and ask owners to restrain their pets.
- Look for signs that an animal is around.
- **Do not** surprise an animal -- let them know you are near.
- Choose a safe route if you jog, walk or bike.
- Keep a safe distance from shrubs, parked cars and other places where an animal may hide or sleep.
- Stay away from stray animals and animal packs -- and places where they are likely to be found.

## **How can you tell if an animal is dangerous?**

In most cases there are warning signs. For example, with a dog you might notice:

- an aggressive posture -- the ears are erect, the body is stiff or tense, and the tail is stiff or moving rapidly.
  - a fearful posture -- ears are back, the body is crouched with the head down, and the tail hangs down or is tucked between the legs.
- **Also watch for:**
  - growling, snarling or snapping
  - staring straight ahead
  - bared teeth or curled lips
  - hair standing on end.

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## If you are threatened by any animal:

- Remain calm.
- Face the animal -- **DO NOT RUN**.
- Shield yourself with any item you have.
- **Do not** make loud or threatening noises.
- **Do not** look directly into the animals eyes.
- Back out of the area (remember to face the animal, never turn your back to them).
- Give firm, simple commands (No, Stop, etc.).



## If you are attacked by any animal:

- Hold your ground.
- Shield yourself with an object or use your arm if you do not have anything else to use as a shield.
- If you are knocked down, curl up into a ball, protecting your head with your arms.
- As a last resort, use a chemical spray.



## If you are bitten or scratched by any animal:

- Wash the wound thoroughly.
- Seek immediate medical help.
- Remember as many details as possible.
- Promptly report any incidents to the Animal Control Department.



**Animals make great friends and playmates, but children — especially those under age 5 — require a great deal of supervision. Whether you own a pet or are simply around animals, here are tips to keep kids protected:**

- Children should not be left alone or allowed to sleep with an animal.
- Ensure that you and your child always wash hands with soap and water after handling pets.
- Teach your child not to pull on the ears and tail of animals, or pinch, squeeze, or make loud noises. He should never disturb a dog while it is resting, sleeping, eating, or playing with a favorite toy.
- Teach your child to never approach strange dogs or animals. He should never reach through a fence to pet a dog.
- Don't allow your pets to lick your child's face or any cuts or scratches.
- Gradually increase your child's responsibility for pet care, but remember you remain the number-one caregiver.
- Mistreating an animal — tugging a tail or playing too rough — usually stems from curiosity or exuberance. Be sure to safeguard your animal's welfare and help your child understand the animal's needs.
- Plan carefully for a new pet so you can commit to caring for it throughout its lifetime. Unfortunately, pets given to shelters are most likely to come from families with kids.